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James L. Smith

DIALOGUES

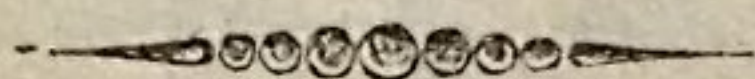
OF THE

G O D S

ORIGINALLY WRITTEN IN GERMAN BY

C. M. WIELAND.

translated by W. Taylor.



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DIALECTS

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PREFACE.

THE following dialogues were originally published in the Teutsche Merkur, a German periodical publication, whence they are now translated into English. They may safely be ascribed to Christopher Martin Wieland, the Lucian of his country, and probably the most popular writer living: for he is, at this time reprinting four several editions of his collective works, which are so numerous that the quarto set is to consist of twenty-five volumes.

The notions of this age are moving, in religion, from superstition toward infidelity;

P R E F A C E.

infidelity ; in morals, from puritanism toward libertinism ; and in politics, from despotism toward democracy. On each walk, Wieland will be found to outstride the average progress of public opinion ; but to stop short of those ne-plus-ultra-men, who would substitute atheism to faith, agamy to matrimony, and anarchy to government.

Should this volume be well received, a second will be undertaken.



C O N-

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*THE AGE OF
RETRIBUTION.*

*Jupiter, half-sitting, half-lying on a
bed of roses: Juno seated at his feet.*

Jupiter.

AND is this all thou requirest, my
dear Juno? hadst thou asked
impossibilities, to please thee, I would
have tried for their accomplishment.

B

Juno.

Juno.

Thou art very galant, Jupiter;
but I shall never claim any thing unreasonable.

Jupiter.

Besides, kings and nobles have always belonged to thy department; and it is the least thou hast a right to from my fondness, to be let alone, when busied about thy own affairs.

Juno.

Nor do I aspire at more ; for, if I understand thy maxims, it were too much to expect that thou thyself shouldst take up kings a little more warmly.

Jupiter

Jupiter.

I observe thou thinkest me too much on the popular side of the question. May-be, but really this only happens, because it is a leading principle of mine always to be on that side which at last prevails. Old times have been favourable to kings: now the people's turn is come: and I am afraid, my love, I shall have done but little for thee and thy clients, by casting no impediments in the way of the measures thou mayst take in their behalf.

Juno.

O! things are not yet come to such a pass, that terrestrials, to be indepen-

dent of us, need only imagine we do not exist.

Jupiter.

As I said, thou mayst try. I give thee full scope; but I foresee that, as things go, thou wilt have little satisfaction from it.

Juno.

I rather wish thou wouldst not foresee upon the present occasion. If I were suspicious---

Jupiter.

That thou hast ever been in some degree, queen of my heart: but this time 'twould be unjust. I am in earnest

est resolved to keep my promise, and to leave the sovereign lords below to thy protection and—to their fate.

Juno.

I own, Jupiter, I cannot comprehend how the king of gods and men can be so indifferent to the cause of kings: and, without stirring a single finger, imperceptibly let his delegates be transformed into stage-princes and kings of card.

Jupiter.

So far 'twill not get quite so smoothly, my love.

Juno.

But so far it is in a great degree got—and will by and by get all the world

B 3

over

over—if we sit with our hands a keem-bow any longer.

Jupiter.

We shall not be able to make out of a king of card any such men as Henry the Fourth and Frederic—and he, who lets himself be made into a king of card, deserves to be nothing better.

Juno.

That is a mere come-off, mister husband. Thou knowst that such kings as those are scarce productions of nature and circumstance—and so much the better. Kings are in fact but our delegates; and the commonest are
good

good enough, if we do not let them fall.

Jupiter.

This compliment of thine is none of the politest, I doubt—but however we will not analyze it. My delegates, as thou callest them, I shall not let fall, so long as they can stand upon their own legs. My office is to let none be oppressed—if I can help it. But, my love, let us never forget this great truth, that kings were made for the people's sake, and not the people for kings'.

Juno.

That is, with your permission, an old saying, which, like most wise
maxims

maxims of the sort, seems to say much, and in fact says very little. Kings were made to govern the people, and the people should let themselves be governed. This Homer knew, when he makes the wise Ulysses say to the populace of the Greek army :

Sway of the many is ruin ; then let only
 one be your ruler,
 One be your king.

And that none should suspect the sceptre to be the free gift of the people, he wisely adds :

Jove's high will has bestow'd upon monarchs
 the token of empire.

This is truth. I know of no greater.

Jupiter.

Jupiter.

I am vastly obliged to thee and Homer: but to speak sincerely, what might pass for truth in those rude ages, in the early periods of the world, is so no longer to a people, which has reached that pitch of experience and refinement, when it has the full use of its reason, and is strong enough to shake off the yoke of its old prejudices and opinions. Nations, like individuals, have their childhood; and so long as they are ignorant, weak, and clouded in their intellects, like children, they may be treated as such; and ruled by blind obedience to an authority which owes them no explanation. Nations, as well as individuals,

duals, do not however always remain children; and it were treason against nature, by force or fraud, or as is most usual, by both, to aim at keeping them in eternal infancy. But it is the height of folly, as well as injustice, to treat them like children, when they are grown up to manhood.

Juno.

I own, Jupiter, that a high degree of information requires an other mode of ruling than that which befits a people still nibbling at the rudiments of science; but all the sages of the earth will never bring things so far as that ten millions of men composing one nation, shall have a million, or even
a thousand

a thousand Epaminondasses and Epicatusses at their head; and thus what Ulysses says will for ever be true :

We Greeks cannot all of us govern :
Sway of the many is ruin : then let only one
be your ruler,
One be your king.

Jupiter.

Granted. Only let it not be denied to a nation, which is so far advanced as to understand its rights, and to know how to reckon its force (and for this a very common understanding is sufficient) to look after its own political affairs. (*Juno shakes her head*) I mean that such a nation should be allowed to desire those of

its number, whom it believes possessed of most insight and probity, to take such precautions against the arbitrary power of any one, or any one's favourites, as that they may be prevented from doing harm; from idly squandering the blood and treasure of the people; from corrupting the public morals; from making wisdom, virtue, and the courage to say aloud what one thinks true, into crimes; in short,—

Juno.

O! there thou art in the right, Jupiter. Kings ought not to dare this. They must be restrained by religion, and the laws. They must acknow-
lege

lege that they received their sceptre from above.

Jupiter.

Harp no more on this string, my love, I beseech. I know best how the thing stands. I doubt the people would be but little the better for it, if kings had nobody over them but me. Unless I reminded them every minute with thunder and lightning that I am at their elbow, they would rule as if there were no Jupiter, tho' they might sacrifice to me a hecatomb a day.

Juno.

Neither do I mean to say that religion is the only thing they ought to look up to.

Jupitèr.

Jupiter.

(*With some warmth*) The worst kings will often respect *us* most. These are they, who have raised the Ulyssean doctrine of divine right into an article of faith, and ground upon it that blind obedience, which they tell the people is the most sacred of their duties.

Juno.

I allow you they should govern by laws, whose object is the general good.

Jupiter.

The general good—a fine word—and who will give them these laws?

Juno.

Juno.

O! these Themis has published long ago to all the earth. Where is a people so barbarous as not to know the universal laws of justice and equity.

Jupiter.

Thou playst the innocent, my sweet; and if kings and their tools, or (which is just the same) if courtiers and *their* tools, the kings, in spite of old Themis and her absolute laws, do govern arbitrarily, and—because they have the power to do it, and are called to account by none—do as much mischief, or (which is all one to the people) suffer as much mischief to be done

done as is convenient to them—how then?

Juno.

That is exactly what we ought to prevent. What else are we in the world for?

Jupiter.

We? Now, my treasure, thou hast it. Only the thinking part of mankind see the matter in another light. We men, they seem to reason, are the only ones who have hitherto suffered from this order of things—we *can* help ourselves and we *will*. He who relies upon another to do for him what he can do for himself, and what signifies to no one more than to himself—will be ill served.

Juno.

Juno.

How thou talkest—if they were to hear thee below—

Jupiter.

We are talking to one another, Juno.—I have no objection to man's knowing that I side with him, who does his duty. I am very willing folks should grow wiser. Time was, when they did me the unmerited honor to attribute to *me* all the mischief done by lightning. And heaven knows what ridiculous abuse I have had to hearken to, when it happened to strike one of my own temples, or to spare a troop of banditti, and kill a just

a just man. Now, since Franklin has found out the secret, and it is known that domes and turrets and high trees are natural conductors, my thunderbolts are less and less attended to, and this without my growing jealous about the matter.

Juno.

We gradually get to moralizing, my dear.

Jupiter.

And dost thou think morals have nothing to do with politics?

Juno.

Not exactly that—but that politics has a morality of its own; and that
what

what is the rule of right to a subject
is not always so to the sovereign.

Jupiter.

I remember the time when I
thought so too. It is a very con-
venient pleasant mode of thinking
for kings—times, however, alter.

Juno.

But, if we remain the same, what
matters ?

Jupiter.

Hear, Juno. Thou knowst I had
always the privilege of more foresight
than the rest of you. Thy positive
tone

tone leads me to reveal to thee more than I at first intended.

Junio.

And what secret can that be? thou lookst so solemn.

Jupiter.

All is subject to the eternal law of change. The turn is come for monarchies, and (*in a whisper*) our own is leaning to its fall, as well as the rest. The mischief will not be great—it was mere patch-work.

Junio.

Thou talkst in thy sleep, Jupiter.

Jupiter.

Jupiter.

First reigned Uranus and Gea ;
then came the kingdom of Saturn ;
this gave way to mine ; and now—

Juno.

And now—Thou art not going to
resign to the national convention at
Paris.

Jupiter.

(*Very coolly*) And now—the
kingdom of Nemesis is at hand.

Juno.

Of Nemesis ?

Jupiter.

Jupiter.

The kingdom of Nemesis ; so says
 an oracle long ago forgotten by gods
 and men, which Themis pronounced
 whilst she still tenanted the Delphian
 soil, and which in these days recurs
 to me. Hear. ‘ If after the rolling
 ‘ of ages a kingdom shall be found
 ‘ upon earth where the tyranny of
 ‘ kings, the presumption of the great,
 ‘ and the oppression of the people
 ‘ shall proceed in equal progress with
 ‘ the culture of all the faculties of
 ‘ mankind, and both arrive so nearly
 ‘ together at their acmé, that at one
 ‘ and the same moment the eyes of all
 ‘ the oppressed shall be opened, and
 ‘ the arms of all be uplifted for re-
 ‘ venge—

' venge—then will the inexorable
 ' but ever-equitable Nemesis, her
 ' scourge of adamant in the one
 ' hand, her compass in the other, de-
 ' scend upon the throne of Olym-
 ' pus—to humble the proud, to exalt
 ' the opprest, to exercise a severe
 ' retribution against every one of
 ' the mighty, who has trodden under
 ' foot the rights of man, and in the
 ' drunkenness of his pride owned no
 ' law but the inordinate claims of his
 ' passions and his caprices. Content
 ' under her to govern, Jove shall
 ' then be only the executor of the
 ' laws, which she shall bestow upon
 ' the people of the earth. Then
 ' shall return an age more golden
 ' than Saturn's, and spread over
 ' countless

‘ countless generations of better men.
 ‘ Universal harmony shall form them
 ‘ all into one family, and mortality
 ‘ alone be the distinction between
 ‘ the happiness of earth and of
 ‘ Olympus.’

Juno.

(*Smiling*) That sounds grand, Ju-
 pitèr. And dost thou really believe
 in this poet’s dream, that thou art re-
 solving with folded arms to await its
 fulfilment.

Jupiter.

(*Solemnly*) I am resolved to sub-
 mit to the only power above me ; and,
 if thou wilt be advised by me, follow
 my

my example, and quietly let come what must come, without forgetting thyself so far as to endeavour at preventing it.

Juno.

Yes, yes, I shall let come what must come : but is that a reason for sloth ? Why give up the power we have in compliment to your prophecies, before the hour of necessity arrives, instead of uniting our forces to exorcise this dæmon of sedition, conspiracy and insurrection which possesses the people ? I keep to my Homer,

Sway of the many is ruin.

The

C

The people should enjoy the advantages of freedom under a paternal authority, nothing can be juster ; but they should not rule, themselves, not cast off the necessary yoke of relative duties, not pursue an equality forbidden by the nature of men and things, and which only flatters the imagination of the people in the moment of intoxication to leave them at the return of sobriety the more alive to their real misery.

Jupiter.

Be easy, my dearest. Nemesis and Themis will know how to regulate justly whatever is now done of too little or too much—too prodigally or too partially.

Juno.

Juno.

I am not yet inclined to concede my influence in the world to another. I feel within me courage to stand by my office ; and, if thou dost side with those who do their duty, I expect thine approval. At least I have thy word that thou wilt not oppose me.

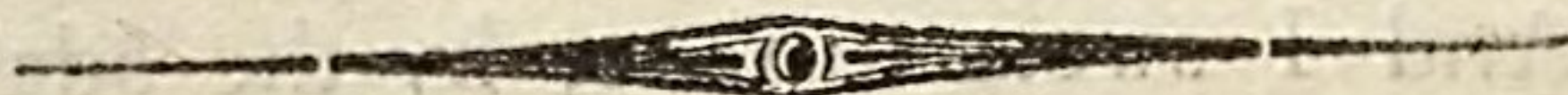
Jupiter.

And I swear to thee, by the adamantine scourge of Nemesis, that I will keep my word so long as thou keepest bounds. Do as thou wilt ; but compel not me to do my duty.

Juno.

Juno.

(*Embracing him*) Let Antinous
bring thee a cup of nectar, Jupiter,
and go to rest. Thou shalt be con-
tent with me.



THE

THE
PANACEA.

*Juno. Semiramis. Aspasia. Livia.
Elizabeth.*

Juno.

YOU already know, my friends,
wherefore I have invited you to this
secret confabulation. Monarchies,
whose protectress I am, are surround-

ed with dangers, which daily become more alarming. They have been shaken to their very foundations, and some of them threaten a speedy downfall, if means be not found to support them betimes. The worst is, that my husband, who, for some time past has strangely altered, and is lately become a great moralizer, seems to favour democratic claims, and to my zeal in behalf of the good old cause, in the choice of means at least, has set limits which I dare not pass. In these circumstances, I have thought it necessary to convoke the wisest and most experienced of the female inhabitants of Olympus—and on whom but you could my choice alight? Each of you, without being born to the sceptre,

tre,

tre, played the first part in the first nation of her age. Thou, Semiramis, merely by thy personal accomplishments, couldst climb from a sheep-cote to the foremost throne of the old world, couldst extend the conquests of the great Ninus, and hast reigned over a croud of subject nations with a good fortune, which seemed for forty years chained to thy footstool. Thou, Aspasia, from a Milesian court-ezan, couldst raise thyself to be the consort of Pericles, and deserve by thy influence over him, in a sense which I myself might envy, to be called the Juno of this new Jove. Thou, Livia, wast, to the heir of the first Cæsar, for nearly fifty years, still more than Aspasia to the demagogue

of Athens : thou wast to him a substitute for his two most essential friends, Mœcenas and Agrippa ; and to thee, the confidant of his bosom and the soul of his resolves, the world was indebted, that the most cruel and hated of usurpers became a ruler beloved to adoration, under whom for the first time the human race enjoyed a general tranquillity for forty years. And thou, virgin Elizabeth, after having overcome a thousand dangers and difficulties which threatened thee and thy kingdom with ruin, by a temper combining an heroic steadiness and the most pliant feminine prudence, hast bequeathed to the world the solitary example of an absolute government over a free people, which loved thee devotedly,

edly, and to obtain whose affection and approbation was thy highest ambition. Four such advisers promise me an assistance that cannot but crown my endeavours with success. Open to me then your thoughts without reserve. What means must be pursued to prevent the total downfall of the existing monarchies, to restore the ancient lustre of thrones, to recover the forfeited confidence of the people, and to render impossible, for the future, such revolutions as we have just been witnessing?

Semiramis.

Great queen of Olympus, however honoured I may feel by the opinion

C 5

thou

thou hast expressed of my talents for sway, I cannot conceal from myself that I must seem less fit than any other to give just advice upon the subject before us; so widely different are the circumstances, in which I sat upon the first throne of the east, from those, in which the kingdoms of the west are at present involved. Yet as I am required to do so, I shall the more freely deliver my opinion, as perhaps this very difference may point out the track of some true maxims, by means of which the duration and the lustre of monocratic government might be conciliated with the happiness of the subject. I consider it as incontrovertable, that monarchy is the most natural form of government,

both

both as it is the easiest and simplest, the most directly adapted to its end, that for which men have most confidence, and if I may so say, that to an innate attachment for which they therefore most easily accustom themselves.

Thus at least must the men of yore have thought, since over the whole earth they were governed by kings. And could they think otherwise? Nature herself, by subjecting man from his childhood to paternal authority, laid the ground-work of this salutary opinion: men took it with them into society, and wont to be absolutely ruled by a father, whom they had not given to themselves, they the more

willingly, submitted to a common father, who became so by their own adoption, or whom they received from the hands of the gods. For, as such, I know it from experience, they looked upon every king, under whose sceptre they came, even by the lot of war. So soon as he, whom they had hitherto obeyed, fell in battle, the conqueror assumed his place; the gods had declared for him; and it did not occur to the conquered people to strive against so valid a decision; particularly as the new monarch had usually more power to protect them, and must have mistaken his own interest, if he had been unwilling to govern his new subjects as paternally as his old ones. In the
early

early ages of the world, therefore, wherever a larger or smaller number of families dwell together, we meet with greater or lesser kings; and I recollect no instance, in which the rude sons of nature are said to have met and to have given themselves an aristocratic or a democratic constitution. Indeed, what should lead them to invent forms of government, so artificial, so complex and so scopeless? When they submitted to kings, it was each man's object only to enjoy in security with his household, the fruits of his fields and herds, beside his paternal hearth, or in the shade of the trees his forefathers had planted. To watch over the general security, to award unto each his right,

right, to punish the disturbers of the public repose, was the office of the king; and the people felt themselves, as in duty bound, obliged to him for accepting so troublesome an employ. Each thought himself fortunate to have only himself and his own affairs to mind, and could not imagine he should be happier if compelled to withdraw a portion of time from his business, his rest, or his pleasures, in order to take part in the public concerns. This way of thinking, which in my time was prevalent in all the little kingdoms of the east, still continued, after a multitude of them had merged into the Assyrian empire under the sway of my husband. The extent of the monarchy
now

now required, beside a splendid court, and a powerful army, a number of offices and dignities, among which the monarch so dexterously divided his supremacy, as nevertheless to keep the reins in his hand, and, as the fountain of all authority, to become the judge of the conduct of those, to whom he intrusted a portion of it. At first, personal services in war or peace were, as is natural, what obtained, and gave a sort of right to, the posts of honor; but although by degrees, from the descendants of kings and of their chief dependants, a sort of hereditary nobility sprang up, to whom birth and education, the merits of their ancestors, and the wealth they had inherited,

rited,

rited, obtained considerable privileges above the mass of the people; yet these were easily accustomed from a sense of equity to tolerate over them a class of men, which claimed a right to these distinctions, and repaid the acknowledgement of them by sacrifices proportionably great. The multitude was so much the easier under it, as after all, every one was equal before the king; and it was common enough to see those who abused these advantages of fortune, tumbled from their prosperity into misery the most humiliating.

Juno.

(*Low to Livia*) Wouldst thou have thought that this old queen of Babylon had been so loquacious?

Livia.

Livia.

I must own she takes a wide compass.

Semiramis.

(After a short pause) It cannot, however, be denied, that, in this species of monarchy, where every thing depended upon the will of an individual, and where there was no remedy for the abuse of his unlimited power, but such as despair might suggest to the oppressed—the people could only be happy and the monarch only secure, so long as he considered his subjects as his children, and was considered by them as their father.

In

In process of time, it happened but too often, that the people had bad fathers, and that weak fathers had ungracious children. No human institution preserves its original simplicity and fitness. It was natural that monarchies should degenerate; that wise, active and good kings should have slothful, voluptuous and tyrannical successors; that the people oppressed and abused should have hurled from their thrones many a ruling family; that sceptres should pass into foreign hands; and one powerful kingdom swallow up another. Yet is it very singular that no oriental nation, after repeated revolutions of this kind, should have hit upon the idea of a monarchy limited by fundamental laws, and still less

less upon that of popular constitutions. Are we not to conclude from it that nations, so steadily devoted to a form of government, whence they have often had much to suffer, must, upon the whole, have experienced from it advantages which countervail its defects? And, if I am not deceived, this is really the case. I even believe that in the occidental nations the people are like-minded; and would every where bear the yoke as patiently, if they were not aroused by restless, ambitious men, who by the imagery of a chimæric freedom entice them to dangerous extravagances. No monocratic government, how profligate soever, is more mischievous than that anarchy, into which a
nation

nation inevitably falls to which too much liberty is given at once, and before it has been inured to bear and to use it. However great the abuses introduced by the sway of one, abuse can be remedied by right use. And were a nation by an unusual pressure of circumstances compelled to help itself, let absurd and cruel laws be repealed, unjust privileges suppressed, excessive taxes abolished, a profuse expenditure of the public income curtailed; but let monarchy itself, which is not an abuse, be preserved. He is no sane physician who would amputate the head because it akes. Suppose even a nation content to expose itself to all the inconvenience, which must necessarily result from the
total

total abolition of an old constitution, in the hope of better times, how can it ever expect to be better off under a democratic constitution? Either its lawgivers must know how to recreate human nature, or the state will, under the appearance of a popular constitution, pass into an oligarchy, still more destructive and insupportable to the people than the despotism of one. But the question is not whether that be an evil for which we are enquiring the remedy—but whether the evil admits of cure.

Junio.

This is in fact the knot I wish to see unravelled. Whilst we are debating, this democratic canker devours. It

It has already desolated one of the most flourishing kingdoms of Europe. It is passing onwards, and we have no time to lose, if our help is to be timely.

Semiramis.

On such occasions there is no scarcity of physicians, who, for fear of losing too much time, think they cannot be too expeditious in encountering the eruptions and other symptoms of the disease. But palliatives are ineffectual, and provocatives only increase the disorder. To meet the evil in its strong hold, and fundamentally to cure; its nourishment must be withdrawn, and the source dried up whence it ever obtains an increment of juices. The people will never
recover

recover a complacence in their condition, and without this no lasting internal repose is possible, nor monarchies their ancient lustre, without restoring the old relation between princes and peoples, until the prince shall behold his people with the heart of a father, and the people their prince with the unlimited confidence of a child, till he shall place his highest glory in the happiness of his subjects; till they, fully convinced that his sole object must necessarily be their good, shall be unable to conceive the possibility of blaming his administration, or hesitating at unconditional obedience to his commands. From such a relation between them, order, tranquillity, well-being, will as inevitably

tably spring in those great families, called states ; as in a single household happiness results from the harmony and reciprocal confidence, and co-operation of husband and wife, parents and children. But how can this ever be brought about, unless the real source of mistrust and misunderstanding between prince and people be stopped up ? I am well aware how much the method I would propose, militates against the prevailing opinions of this age, and I should scarcely venture to name it, were I not fully convinced that it is no less innocent and beneficial than infallible in its operation.

Junio.

Juno.

Thou excitest all my curiosity,
Semiramis, what means can these
be?

Semiramis.

Very simple ones, goddess. The
liberty of openly speaking and writ-
ing upon the public concerns of
nations, upon the natural and social
rights of man, upon the legislation
and administration of rulers, or what-
ever comes uppermost to a man,
perhaps of weak, of troubled, or of
jaundiced eyesight, and whose very
situation may forbid a just prospect—
must be declared for what it is, a dis-
turbance of the public repose, and
D must

must be suppressed by every method of authority. The sciences in general, and particularly those comprehended under the name of philosophy, must again be covered with that holy veil of mystery, which the rash Greeks first uplifted, and must be intrusted to an order of sages, whose constitution and conduct the government, upon which they should ever be kept dependent, must superintend, and influence, and restrain within proper limits. The people, on the contrary, to whom nothing is more injurious than to know too much and to see too clearly, must be confined to that sphere of activity, which is allotted to each class, and be placed in the utter impossibility of
of

of acquiring at pleasure a knowlege which may so easily be abused, and whose abuse is so detrimental not only to the state, but to the people themselves.

Aspasia.

(*With some warmth*) How, Semiramis ! wouldst thou for the sake of thy kings, place a barrier to the great plan of nature, the eternally progressive improvement of human kind, and—

Semiramis.

Pardon me, Aspasia, for interrupting you. I intend no more than to resist the improvident use of know-
D 2
lege,

lege, and to place the people in the beneficial impossibility of swallowing poison for medicine, or, if you will, of poisoning itself with medicinal drugs, which it needs not. The sages shall attend to the increase of the great treasure of human acquisition, and labour as much as they please, to extend the limits of human comprehension : it shall even be their office to deal out to the people, under the inspection of the supreme power, those discoveries and inventions, which are likely to better its condition, without producing on the other hand, any inconvenience. But it shall not be allowed to the sages, to scatter, without distinction, whatever they know and think : much less shall
the

the unwise laity be, at liberty, by the diffusion of their folly, to disturb the happiness and the repose of human society. As for information, in this respect too extremes meet. It appears, at present, to have reached its acmé, and one universally perceivable consequence of this, is, that all are wishing once more for the return of those golden ages, when mankind was as yet so happy in the injoyment of an artless simplicity, of sincerity, warmth and energy of character; that the most accomplished and fortunate pupils of modern refinement, amid their voluptuous and exquisite pleasures, cannot avoid envying the happiness of those rude sons of nature.—

Why, but because this feeling is dif-

fusing itself more and more, are lively descriptions of the uncorrupt savage state, almost the only thing that operates with resistless charms upon all dispositions. Methinks it cannot but stare us in the face, here, whence we can overlook the whole circle of society, that amid the languor of extreme indulgence (which is improperly mistaken for improvement) every thing is leaning imperceptibly anew toward that condition, whence the human species emerged some millenniums ago. Nature, in this, pursues her everlasting circle. But if she has given us the power, by reflection and reason, of co-operating in her ends, what can we do better than to favour those institutions,

tions, by which her most benevolent aim, the contented repose of man, is most speedily and certainly to be attained.

Juno.

Thy proposals, queen Semiramis, certainly merit consideration ; and methinks I read in Aspasia's eyes a little impatience to unfold her opinions upon the subject.

Aspasia.

Since Semiramis, for the better support of her opinion, has thought it necessary to go into the origin of society, be it allowed me in general to remark, that the difference of soil

D 4

and

and climate, and of the wants originating in local situation, places at a considerable distance, the inhabitants of the luxuriant regions of the east, and the wandering hordes who have gradually peopled the north and the west. Among those, from immemorial ages the despotism of one has been established: among these, liberty. I shall not deny, that in an agricultural, and therefore quiet people, the household patriarchal authority, may have laid the foundation and furnished the model for oriental monarchies. But it is also certain, that the nomade nations, who lived by hunting, by pasturage, or by plunder, preserved for ages a species of society, which no otherwise restricted natural liberty

berty than in as much as each, for the common good, voluntarily submitted to some common law. These rude men lived in perpetual strife with each other, and with the beasts of the forest. Such a state rendered a leader essential; and as personal excellencies formed the only difference among them, it was natural that the keenest hunter, the bravest warrior, the best adviser in a difficulty, should unanimously be made the leader and chieftain of the horde. These captains of the free hordes of the north-west were also called kings and princes: but what a difference between these and the despots of the east; between the *elected* chief of a free people, and a monarch, who,

in virtue of the ascendancy, which a gang of armed persons give him over a peaceable and weaponless peasantry, exercises that unlimited authority, which nature gives to a father over his infant children, over millions of men, no less entitled to it than himself, and who only uses the mild name of father, in order, with some show of right, to extort from his pretended children the blind all-suffering obedience of vassals. The ancient inhabitants of Europe knew not this eastern sort of kings; and though, in later times, they may have formed several greater and lesser monarchies; though the example of Roman and Asian despots, and still more the internal effort of monarchy itself, toward

toward an unlimited extension of its authority, favoured by a new religion and other accidental causes, may have given an increasing strength to royal power: yet the original spirit of freedom, which for so many centuries had its chief station in this part of the world, has never been wholly subdued, any more than the right to freedom can ever prescribe, by what it may please certain generations of men to do, or to bear.

Semiramis.

What the beautiful Aspasia has just been opposing to my maxims, concerning government and monarchy, so far from weakening them,

D 6

has,

has, in my opinion, set their validity in a stronger light. Be it that the progenitors of all nations were free savages; that in a stage of society, confined to hunting, pasturage and plunder, they maintained, for centuries, a freedom, which assimilated them so nearly to the beasts of the field—can nature have destined the noblest of her offspring, for ever to remain wandering shepherds, or to lead the lives of beasts of prey? It confirms my assertion, that man, only in as much as he is savage, is found to place his highest good in independence; but as soon as he follows his real destination (to cultivate the ground, and by art to reform rude nature for his advantage or gratification)

cation) gradually assumes milder inclinations and manners, learns to know and to respect the laws of property, and subjects himself to the sway of an individual. And Aspasia herself must acknowledge, that in process of time, this was also the case with her Scythian and Celtic hordes. It demonstrates that, not liberty, but a calm submission to the sceptre of a regent, who, as father of his people, unites the legislative, judicial and executive powers, these being the three leading branches of paternal authority, is the true state prepared and intended by nature to educate man for sociability and morality, and the advantages of civil union.

Aspasia.

Aspasia.

Instead of venturing upon an unequal contest with a queen so wont to every species of victory: I shall rather concede that the government of one is the most natural and convenient of all forms, which the superintendance of the common concerns of any people can assume. Perhaps this position has no where so remarkably been confirmed, as in free states, which, as Athens under Pericles, Rome under Scipio Africanus, Genoa under Andreas Doria, have mostly attained the summit of prosperity, when the people, without any sacrifice of their liberties, have intrusted the conduct of their more important

important concerns, with confidence unlimited, to one great man. Pericles, without ever wearing any other title than that of general, ruled, till his death, over the free Athenians, much more absolutely than Pisis-tratus, over whom, he had perhaps no other advantage than the love of the people. He did, in the strictest sense of the words, every thing he pleased; because he had the dexterity never to let any thing be commanded him by the Athenians, but what he thought it right for them to order, and the prudence to do nothing of his own authority, but what was reputable or agreeable to them. This instance, that the almost absolute power of one is very compatible

patible with a democratic constitution, appears to me to prove that a monarch, possessed of the spirit and talent of a Pericles, may concede to his people a high degree of freedom, without impairing much his own authority and influence. The great point is, by personal superiority to acquire the esteem, and by popularity, the affection of the people. With these advantages, the most limited monarch will reign more absolutely over the minds of free men, than an Asiatic despot over the bodies of discontented slaves. I am, indeed, requiring what very few princes are able to accomplish. A government, reposing upon filial confidence of the people in the paternal

paternal heart of the monarch, may be vastly more convenient to the latter: but I am much afraid, that the times cannot be recalled, in which the supposition of this paternal and filial relation between sovereign and subject, is possible. The Europeans, at least, seem, at length, to have reached the years of autonomy, and to be no longer inclined to concede to their regents any other authority than a father has over his son, at the age of discretion. The proposal of Semiramis to set bounds to information, and once more to make the sciences into the secret business of an order, as formerly they were in India, Egypt and Persia, is scarcely practicable in
great

great nations, already possest of diffusive culture. Rather should I hope to snatch from Hercules his club, than from a people which had once learned to reason, to tear this most formidable of weapons. Such a people considers the whole stock of experience, science and art, which the present century has heired from preceding ages, and so immensely increased by its own exertions, as no less the common property of man, than light, than air. And every incroachment upon the liberty of drawing, at pleasure, out of this common stock, is, in its eyes, a tyrannic attack upon the most imprescriptible right of a rational being. In short, I am very much mistaken,

mistaken, if, as things are now situate, a concert of princes against improvement were not the most unfailing means of accelerating the downfall of thrones, or scattering incalculable evil over nations. I am, therefore, far from countenancing the advice of the great queen, but am, on the contrary, convinced, that the best thing which monarchs can do for the consolidation of their authority, is to leave their subjects at full liberty to make use of their intellect, and even, industriously to encourage, instead of restraining, the circulation of all sorts of knowlege, and of every production of the human mind. I say this with experience on my side, for I am certain that Pericles kept

kept

kept possession so long of the supreme power in Athens, chiefly by making so much use of the talents of the learned men, and of the artists of his time to their own mutual improvement, and to the embellishment of their common country, and that by affording to their lively and restless spirits innocent opportunities of explosion, by the freedom allowed in the sophists' schools, in the theatre, in the public places of assembly, he contrived to withdraw their activity from an over jealous attention to his administration. I am bold to maintain, that every monarch, who should pursue this plan (supposing him in other respects to use his people at all tolerably) would derive from it the
like

like advantages. The surest means of rendering harmless the effects of the dangerous, and, in a certain sense, immeasurable energy of the human mind, is to give it full scope. The man, occupied in legislating for an imaginary republic, forgets, over his task, to meddle with the real world: and he, who writes tragedies for the theatre, will get up none for the historian. The arts of the Muses, and, in general, all the arts which toil for the amusement and embellishment of life, occupy and exhaust great powers, which, in the absence of so agreeable and innocent a playground, might easily, on the spur of trivial circumstances, take another direction, and become just as dangerous

rous to society as they are now beneficial. Besides, the experience of all ages teaches, that a people is the easier to govern, the more liberally it is governed; and that it willingly forgoes its claims to political liberty, if its personal liberty be respected. It may be relied upon, that for such an indemnity, men will acquiesce in many sacrifices. And, indeed, nothing can be more ill-founded than the notion, that arts and sciences make a people disposed to resist that necessary pressure of authority, which holds the state together. Experience uniformly exhibits the reverse. The more clearly men see the for and against of a question, the more unwilling are they to exchange their
 present

present situation, if it be not quite insufferable, for an unknown and uncertain one : and embarrassed in the very complex relations of civil life, like captives in the vulcanic net, much will they bear with, before they attempt forcibly to break loose.

Nevertheless, great queen of the gods, I fear that, with all our good will, it is scarcely possible to be of much service to monarchs, as things now stand between them and their subjects. For what can we advise? The wise man helps himself; and the foolish man will either not listen to good advice, or if he attends, follow it foolishly, and thus, through our very counsel, get into a worse predicament

dicament than before. In a word : woe to him who is at the head of a nation, and is not the most intelligent and bravest man in it ! However, that I may not break off without having contributed my opinion, I should propose to warn all regents against being persuaded by dim-sighted advisers, to stand in the way of that great revolution, which is beginning to take place in the understandings of mankind ; it would be incomparably more honourable and more safe for them, to live upon good terms with reason, to let her take her own course, and, above all, very quietly to let every one think as he feels, speak as he thinks, believe as he likes, and do what he cannot avoid.

avoid. If, after this, thou requirest any other counsel, mine is, for those, who have no right to expect they can fill the annals of their time with praise-worthy deeds, at least to take care, that history should say nothing at all about them.

Funo.

Thou hast not unlearned among us, Aspasia, the tone of urbanity, which it was thine to teach two thousand years ago to the Socrates and Alcibiades at Athens. But kings, I perceive, have in thee no very ardent patroness. Julia Augusta, who is next in turn, will, I hope, show more predilection for

E their

their cause ; a woman, beneath whose influence, the greatest of all republics changed into as quiet a monarchy as ever descended after a series of kings to its possessor. The wife and mother of two princes, who, in the most dexterous tricks of state-craft, have been excelled by none, must be able, if any one can, to discover a resource for my clients, in their present extremity.

Livia.

It cannot be denied, that Cæsar Augustus found a deal of art necessary to keep himself fifty years in a post, which his great predecessor, perhaps the first among mortals, and
formed

formed by nature to rule over the rest, could scarcely retain for a twelve-month. Still are we apt to ascribe to human wisdom, a much greater share in what happens in the world, than it really deserves; many things are attributed to my husband, and perhaps to me, the credit of which rather belongs to our fortune than to our prudence. Indeed, Augustus was so singularly fortunate, that not only the easy art of turning to account both the advantages of his own situation and the errors of his rivals; but his very faults and foibles, because they proved useful to him, have been numbered among his merits. The circumstance which most profited him was, that the Ro-

mans and all the rest of the world were in the situation of a shipwrecked crew, to whom the first best plank which promises a salvage is welcome. If the battle at Actium had been decided in favor of his rival, the death of Octavius must have been the result; and the people would have thrown themselves with equal, or perhaps greater enthusiasm, into the arms of Anthony. But be this as it may, I certainly do not say too much, if I call the behaviour of Augustus to the Romans—from that day, when he resigned all his power into their hands in order to receive it back under the different appellations to which their ears were accustomed, until the celebrated *Plaudite* with which

which he closed the *Mimus* of his life—a most instructive school for kings: particularly for such as rule over a people, who entertain a jealous love of the name of freedom, and an attachment to democratic forms—or even for an unlimited sovereign, who, as once seemed the probable lot of the late king of the West Franks, should feel himself compelled to give up the legislative authority to his people, and to bear with a constitution which left him little else than the name of king. Augustus, it is true, found himself in the diametrically opposite condition. Of all that composes a king, he wanted only the name; whereas, the Romans preserved nothing, but

the empty forms, the husk of their ancient constitution. But the hinge of all is, that Augustus, nevertheless, behaved as if the Roman people was every thing, and he nothing, but what they chose to make of him. He measured all his steps, weighed all his speeches and actions, even in his private life, with so anxious a precision; employed his authority with so much modesty and reserve, appeared, in every thing he desired or undertook, so solicitous, that it should also have the approbation of the people; knew so skilfully how to make every exertion, which might have rendered his despotism obnoxious, appear a compliance with public opinion; in a word, he acted popularity with so much

much dexterity and decorum, that the most limited regent of a free nation could not have applied more art to acquire an authority which he had not, than Augustus to conceal an authority which he had. The impartiality with which I have laid bare a man, whose fame is so closely knit up with my own, exactly on that side, which he most cautiously concealed, gives me a right to add, that although necessitated by circumstances to play a part, and to have recourse to artifices, in order to convert an insecure and usurped power into a just and durable one, yet the use which he made of this power has entitled him to an honourable place among the best princes who ever mounted the

throne. Augustus united in himself every thing that Semiramis and Aspasia have noticed as the requisites of a good sovereign; and he surely reigned like a parent, who obtained not from needy or retained flatterers, but from the glowing hearts of the grateful Romans, the name of 'father of his country.' If I acknowlege, that in his popularity there was much of stage-trick and deception, it would be unfair to deny that this very art, since it was beneficial to the Romans, belongs among his merits. So corrupt a people as the Romanlings of his time were, and as at present all European nations are, chooses to be cheated, and must often be so, for its own advantage. But that it may not
every

every instant be aroused from its voluntary slumber, from its golden dream, a something real must serve for a substratum, its heart, its confidence must be gained; and the latter is seldom possible without real merits, without actual services done to its welfare. Had a nation nothing to thank its princes for, but a more comfortable fashion of life, men will always look upon what flatters their senses with acuter gratitude, than infinitely greater benefits, whose value is only perceived by the understanding, and enjoyed in slow-ripening fruits.

Thou seest, great goddess, that my opinion differs from that of

Aspasía only in this respect, that she seems not to think well enough of our sceptered clients, for the only counsel we have to give them to find admission. I own that I entertain of many of them a better opinion. It is natural that the idea of a perfect king, which each of us entertains, should resemble that master in the art, which we have severally been most acquainted with. But I am much mistaken, if the leading maxims, which each of us thinks most essential to a wise and happy sway, may not easily be united : or rather, the sway of Augustus is a real example of this union, and therefore merits, like the celebrated canon of Polycletus among the statuaries, to be

be adopted as a model by all princes. I am aware how much I am requiring of these sirs ; but my object is by no means to make court to them. For him, who addicts himself to governing without being conscious of possessing the necessary talents ; for him, who shuns the toils and troubles unavoidably connected with it, and has not the firm purpose of showing himself worthy of the first place in the state, by all possible exertions for the happiness of his people—for him, I have no other counsel than that he lay down, as soon as possible, a burden, which he either cannot, or will not, properly support. Even an hereditary crown is usurped when it is not deserved.

Junio.

And thou too—Livia; dost thou require all this of kings?

Livia.

Pardon me, goddess, I require of them no more than the boys of my time, in Rome, required of their mock-kings: He that does it best (were they wont to say) shall be king.

Junio.

This is exactly what I consider as too severe. Were the right once conceded to the people of weighing its kings in this balance, how many
dost

dost thou think would retain possession of hereditary thrones? And yet long experience has taught us, that it is more favourable to public tranquillity, when, by means of an established order of succession, the choice of the prince is left to chance.

Livia.

My opinion, by no means, goes to conceding any right, the exercise of which would be ruinous, and soon destroy all civil order. The people has nothing to claim of government but security and justice. The regent ought to require so much the more of himself; or, if he be such a king, as the log in the fable, I do not see with what right
he

he can complain, if the frogs jump about upon him with contempt.

Junio.

And at length it will come out, that it is no easy matter to give the frogs such a king as they need. But we are imperceptibly wandering, methinks, from the subject of our debate ; it is for thee, queen Eliza, to call us in, and to propose methods of remedying the evil we have to get rid of, such as the times warrant and require, methods within our power, and safe enough in the application, for us to run no risk of making the cure worse than the original disease.

Elizabeth.

Elizabeth.

The reason why many a sick person cannot recover, lies less in the want of effectual remedies, than in the patient's unwillingness to try them. And this, I fear, may be the case with many kings, whom thou, great protectress of thrones, wouldst fain help out of their difficulties. In my opinion there is, indeed, an infallible method, by which every thing might be kept in proper equilibrium between king and people; but as it is no less solitary than infallible, and requires a sacrifice on the part of thy clients, which no one of them perhaps will, by choice, consent to—I must acknowledge

knowlege that I place little more
 confidence in the effect of our de-
 liberation, than Aspasia, and am
 almost certain that necessity alone
 will, at length, force these blind-
 folded men to the measures, which,
 I fear, they are neither just enough,
 nor wise enough, to take of their own
 accord. Several proposals have al-
 ready been made, which, under the
 preconceived conditions, would be
 very admirable ; but, unluckily,
 these conditions are of a nature not
 to be relied upon, or expected.
 Certainly, every nation, paternally
 governed by a wise and good prince,
 will feel itself happy under his
 sceptre. But where is the mortal,
 or the god, who can promise to any
 nation

nation one, much less a succession of such regents. And, if the reverse takes place—if the monarch, who can and may do any thing, is a tyrant—if he gives unwise, unjust laws, which infringe upon, or violate the rights of men—if he himself acknowledges no law but his prejudices and selfish passions—if he disposes, arbitrarily, of the property, the strength, the liberty and the lives of his subjects—squanders in favouritism a public income harshly squeezed—exposes his land to the oppression and devastation of unnecessary and foolish wars—in short, if he uses his unlimited authority, as most despots have ever done, and ever will do—what then remains

mains, upon the plan of the queen of Babylon, for his abused people, but the melancholy choice of suffering what is intolerable, or, if at length in despair it breaks violently the insupportable chain, to expose itself to all the dangers and mischiefs of a sudden, planless, and perhaps universally ruinous revolution? If the monarch is a tyrant, I said—and it will be answered, that our times produce no Busirises or Phalarises, no Neroes or Domitians.—But there are many ways of being a tyrant. A man may be a tyrant under the mask of a good and pious prince, paternally anxious for the quiet and good order of his subjects. There are, perhaps, no more Neroes.

But

But has nature broken the moulds in which she fashioned a Louis XI. of France; an emperor Ferdinand II. a Philip II. of Spain? Was not the fourteenth Louis called the Great, and the fifteenth the Well-beloved? And do there not vegetate, at this moment, such fathers of their country, who, when their love of justice and their good-heartedness is praised by a thousand tongues, look on with utter indifference, while their subjects are plundered in their name? Do we not know lands, which the liberality of nature, and the industry of the inhabitants, had made examples of the most flourishing welfare, which have sunken under such *good* princes into a decline, which they
would

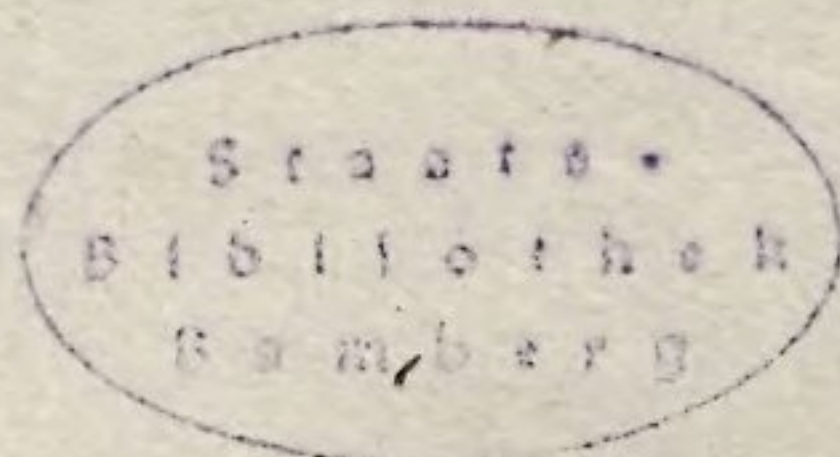
would certainly not have incurred under a Tiberius? Perhaps there lives not upon earth, a sovereign, for whose ear and heart, the lovely surname of Louis XII. (father of the people) would have no charms, and, yet, I can name more than one, who thinks he loves his people with the tenderness of a father, and perhaps really loves them; whose government is so managed, that the year may be pretty accurately foretold, in which he will have reduced the greater number of his dear children to beggary. Undoubtedly Semiramis pronounced a great truth when she said, that the evil, for which we are studying a remedy, cannot be removed by palliatives.

But,

But, what are all these illusions of the people, in which she, and Livia, seem to place the great art and mystery of reigning; this pleasing doctrine of a paternal and filial relationship, between sovereign and subject; or, these treacherous arts, to lull a people into sweet dreams of freedom, while bond after bond is coiled about its members; while it is amused with mummeries and gilded hopes; while it is even studiously provided with every opportunity of satisfying its childish or luxurious passions, in order that it may feel happy for a moment, when it is imperceptibly modelling into the victim of an artful demagogue, or a despotic monarch? What are these

these delusions but a sort of spell, by which the evil is, for a short time, charmed to sleep, whilst it continues secretly spreading, and must break out afresh with double fury at the least external occasion? Even the perpetual attention to the wishes of the people, the careful regard to its prejudices and humours, and (to call it by its true name) the political coquetry, with which I myself once wooed the approval and the love of my capricious people, and which arose less, perhaps, from the desire of pleasing, which is so natural to our sex, than from a wish to hide what of odious there might be in a pretty absolute way of governing, and from the necessity of
of

of studying the security of a throne, not very firm, itself deserves no better name, notwithstanding all the praise I acquired, and the satisfaction my people derived from it. It may be true of times, while as yet but confused ideas are entertained of the reciprocal rights and duties of sovereign and subject, while the people but imperfectly suspect the full compass of their just claims, and the ruler is disposed to give to his own every possible extension, in short of times, in which we and our predecessors governed, that every corrupt people, and, I will add, every ignorant people, and every people habituated to centuries of deception, is cheated, and often must be so, for



for its own good, as long as this period of childhood, of error, and of delusion, endures: yet, at length, the time must come, when men will no longer chose to be cheated, will know how things are, and whether it be for them the lesser evil, to live in civil society, or to return to the natural state of equality, and under what conditions the former is to be preferred. Every thing deceives me, or this period is approaching; and in that case I see but one measure, by which the dreadful evils, threatened to one portion of the human race, can be prevented.

Funno.

Junio.

Hasten to communicate them, Elizabeth; for I hope thou wilt not, a second time, deceive my hopes.

Elizabeth.

At least, goddess, the fault shall not be mine. My project, as I said at first, is no less the infallible, than the only one, which can rationally be embraced. But I believe I know rulers too well—from the first of kings to the burgo-master of the smallest nest of Abderites in the world—to hope that by mere arguments, they will ever be motivated to lend their hands to it.

F

Junio.

Junio.

Let not this care embarrass thee,
Elizabeth. If this be all, we will
find means to influence their will.

Elizabeth.

That is the very thing I question, goddess. Certainly iron necessity will at length compel them to it ; but if they let it come to that, the right moment is over, and I no longer answer for the consequence.

Junio.

Thou art inclined to exercise my patience, as of old that of thy lovers, Elizabeth. Thy measures—

Elizabeth.

Elizabeth.

Are so simple and so obviously what must at the first glance occur to men connected with each other in political society, that, if facts were not so decisive upon the subject, it would be incredible that the world should have lasted several milleniums before it came into the mind of a single nation. And even this was, as the phrase is, to run its head against it. It has always been universally acknowledged, that the most absolute monarch has duties, and the most servile nation rights; but in what these duties consist, whither they extend, in what limits

F 2

they

they are comprehended, and what measures must be taken to procure to the people the full enjoyment of their rights, and to pin the sovereign down to the fulfilment of his duties—these are points, about which very confused and unsettled notions are entertained, and over which all possible obscurity has purposely and industriously been cast. At length, however, the instructive and tremendous fate of one nation has opened the eyes of every other ; and the conviction is becoming universal, that nothing but a **CONSTITUTIONAL REFORM**, in which, the rights of each class of citizens, may be defined with precision, and protected by

by adequate regulations, against all arbitrary incroachments, can preserve every other country from similar scenes. The magical illusions, with which nations have hitherto been deceived, can be managed only in a mist. Reason has, at length, dispelled it. All the social institutions must now be submitted to her revisal. The growth of a civilization more diffusive must be favoured. The superfluous laws and superannuated establishments of barbarous ages must be carefully removed. They cannot long be held up, even by force. Violent means, beside their being no less unjust than odious, help indeed for the moment, but in reality acce-

lerate the dreadful catastrophe they are intended to prevent. It is obvious, therefore, that nothing remains but the sooner the better to resolve upon doing what ought to have been done long ago. A **NEW CONSTITUTION** to be arbitrated between convened deputies of the people and the powers established, a constitution founded on universal justice and the nature of civil society, is the infallible, easy and single remedy to remove all the curable evils of political community, to restore the greatest possible harmony between sovereign and subject, and to settle the welfare of states upon a solid and irreversable foundation.

Junno.

Junio.

Thy proposal has much of my approbation. I do not see why monarchs should hesitate to set about this important work with pleasure, and of their own accord.

Elizabeth.

He that has once been in possession of indefinite power, will scarcely ever be very desirous of setting bounds to it. In my own England, it cost one king his head, and his second son a crown, before their successors could be induced to acknowledge those rights, which the nation had thought fit to reserve to

itself, as a fundamental law of the land.

Junio.

Princes, since then, are become more enlightened and more equitable, Elizabeth. They will be more easily satisfied.

Elizabeth.

What—even those who can maintain their divine right to the passive obedience of their subjects, with thirty or forty legions of subservient soldiers?

Junio.

Thou confidest very little in the paternal heart of kings.

Elizabeth.

Elizabeth.

I was myself a queen—allow me to be a little incredulous.

Semiramis.

In this point, I agree with Elizabeth.

Livia.

I am very much afraid, she is not mistaken.

Juno.

We must consider then of means, my friends, to convince the shepherds of the people, that for their own se-

curity and tranquillity, as well as for their reputation and character, no method so effectual can be used, as, without delay, to set about the proposal of Elizabeth. A thought occurs to me, which in old times, has been recurred to with effect. I will at once send Iris to the god of dreams, and command him this very night to visit all kings and princes, with a vision, corresponding with the peculiar situation of each, which shall set before him in lively portraiture, the advantage, the merit, and the honor of Elizabeth's suggestion on the one hand, and on the other, the miserable consequences to his people, and the danger and shame to himself, which must spring from the contempt
of

of such counsel. This shall be done in so impressive a manner, that on his awaking, it shall be as impossible for him to withstand the effect of his vision, as it was to king Agamemnon, to disobey the deceitful dream, sent him by Jupiter, to stimulate his falling upon the Trojans.

Semiramis.

A happy thought, goddess, whose execution can hardly fail of its aim.

Aspasia.

I wish so: but in these incredulous times, a faith in dreams is, perhaps, but little to be trusted to.

F 6

Elizabeth.

Elizabeth.

Kings may form an exception. At any rate they can be addressed waking.

Junio.

Enough for this time: we shall see what my dreams will produce.

THE

THE FEDERATION.

*Jupiter Olympius, Saint Louis; and,
afterwards, Jupiter Horkius, and
Jupiter Pluvius, two sub-delegates
of the Olympian Jupiter.*

Jupiter Olympius.

COULDST thou have imagined,
friend Louis, in thy time, that these
Frenchmen were, in the course of
five hundred years, to take such a
stride ;

stride; and after passing even with their own moralists for the most frivolous and capricious people upon earth, to set examples to the world, which (if aright I read the hieroglyphics of fate) by degrees will introduce below a new and a better order of things.

Saint Louis.

I must own—

Jupiter Olympius.

Was ever so rapid a transition heard of from despotism to freedom; so precipitate a leap from the vilest degradation of mankind to the liveliest sentiment of their full dignity

nity and the evolution of their noblest powers? Once more, honest Louis, couldst thou have expected from thy nation, at the very moment, when it was sunk so low as to be despised by the most contemptible people of Europe, so astonishing a degree of energy, and what is more, some symptoms of perseverance in an enterprise, which not long ago seemed to the most penetrating to be impracticable.

Saint Louis.

The kernel of my nation was ever brave and loving. However uncultivated their dispositions, however rude their notions, however unre-

unrestrained their impetuosity was in my time, I had full opportunity to detect, in the character of my Franks, the seeds of every thing beautiful and great. Now my hopes seem likely to be justified. I do not know but their natural vivacity, and the pressure of circumstances, may have tempted them a step too far: but this I think I may say without vanity, that if my successors had stuck a little closer to the maxims of conduct which influenced my reign (except indeed during the fatal crusades) things would not have come to this pass with poor Louis XVI. and the other unfortunate descendants of my sixth son Robert.

Jupiter

Jupiter Olympius.

Here is my hand, Saint Louis.
For a knight of so rude an age,
who had to begin acting the king
in his eleventh year, had been
brought up by monks, and used to
bid his beads half a dozen times
a day, thou wast quite a miracle
of a wise and good prince.

Saint Louis.

This is more than I deserve. If
I had some virtues I cannot but
acknowledge, now that I have ac-
quired juster ideas of right and
wrong, that the few quiet years,
which

which France was blessed with under my reign, did not atone for a hundredth part of the evil, which, with the best intentions in the world, I brought upon my people by a couple of Quixotades against the infidels. My heart bleeds when I think of it.

Jupiter Olympius.

In your place I should think no more about it. What can't be altered should be made the best of. To be sure it was a great folly to attempt forcing, sword in hand, thy prophet upon nations, who happened to have another. And to get possession of any sepulchre, even had it
been

been my own in Crete, it was never worth sending all the gold and silver in thy kingdom into Italy and Egypt, and sacrificing the blossoms of thy knights and squires, to bring home maimed limbs, empty purses, and the filthiest of diseases. But this chivalrous spirit thou hadst in common with many a great and little prince of thy time. Thy virtues were all thy own. What thou didst for the good of thy people ought to be valued two-fold to thee ; as nothing but an unusual rectitude of head and heart could enable thee, in such a period, to govern with infinitely more wisdom than the three kings, who bore thy name in an æra of the highest refinement

refinement and information, and who annually kept thy holiday in great parade at the head of their knights of St. Louis.

Saint Louis.

In fact, it cannot but be some consolation to me, that, at the mere instigation of common sense, I should have struck into the same paths of government, which the clearest heads in France are now pursuing, in order to accomplish the regeneration of the state. My anxieties had ever for their object the most numerous, and most useful, although the most neglected portion of the people. I set as narrow bounds as was possible,
under

under a constitution which I could not change, to the overbearing claims of the nobility, of the clergy, and even of the Romish see. To the learned of the third estate, I rendered all places accessible which can only be well filled up by informed persons, but which hitherto had been exclusively given to nobles, few of whom could write their own names. In order to put an end and a bound to the arbitrary decisions of my barons, I erected four courts of justice, in which experienced men, gave awards to whoever asked them. I never forgot that the royal dignity is but a trust, for the fulfilment of which we are responsible to our people, to posterity, and to heaven.

heaven. I never laid my hand upon the property of my subjects, but husbanded my domains with œconomy, and, as I spent little upon my courtiers and my person, I was always enabled to be liberal on proper occasions, and even to undertake great things without burdening my people. In short, however inconsiderable the good I did, compared with what I was not able to accomplish, or wise enough to undertake, I find no small consolation in the thought that I bequeathed to my successors the outlines of a plan of government, by whose execution France would long ago have become, what it now hopes to be, with much danger and much sacrifice, by means of
 its

its new lawgivers; without my son Louis having any other merit in the matter than that of nodding assent, willing or nilling, to every thing.

*Jupiter Horkius enters and speaks to
Jupiter Olympius.*

Mighty ruler of Olympus, a nation, on which the eyes of the whole world are fixed, is about to begin a solemnity, such as the sun, since it inlightens the earth, has never seen.

The day has dawned, on which their king, with the representatives of the whole nation, as holders of the legislative power, and with the deputies of the standing army and soldier-citizens

citizens of all the municipalities, are to unite, and, before the altar of freedom and unanimity, to hail the new constitution, which is to consolidate for ever, the happiness of posterity. The social compact, without which, a state coheres, not like a living organic body, but, like the bones of a skeleton wired together, this spontaneous fraternization of free men to compose one nation, which equal in its rights, as men and as citizens, binds itself to obey in equal degrees the same laws—laws, whose foundations are graven by universal reason, with indelible characters in every human soul, and which secure equally to every citizen the injoyment of these imprescriptible

tible

tible rights—this compact, hitherto
 the dream of the wise, and the
 pious, but vain wish of the friends
 of human kind, is, to-day, for the
 first time, really to be concluded and
 sworn to by the greatest of the free
 nations in the world, in the face of
 heaven and earth. What a day!
 What a sight for gods and men!
 What an example for cotemporaries
 and posterity! This singular festival!
 This mighty triumph of reason over
 ancient prejudice! This glorious har-
 binger of Astrea's return, of the bet-
 ter golden age, ought also outwardly
 to be the clearest, most chearful,
 most auspicious of days. It were
 worthy of thee, mighty Olympius,
 to favour the solemn moment of the

G

fairest

fairest contract ever sworn under thy auspices, with a visible sign of thine approbation. Let it please thee, therefore, to issue thy commands to the god of the winds; and, above all, to thy substitute Jupiter Pluviùs, from this present moment, to bind their storms in fetters, to chase from the Parisian horizon every dripping cloud, and only, from time to time, to waft such light floating vapours beneath the sun, as may be necessary to screen that innumerable multitude, which the great circus of national confederation will include, from the too fiery rays of Helios, who would be proud to adorn this solemnity with all the magnificence of his brightest beams.

Jupiter

Jupiter Olympius.

(*Laughing*) My dear Horkius, what a progress thou hast made in the schools of eloquence, which thou seemst to have been frequenting lately. Yet is the request no more than reasonable from thee, and I applaud the zeal with which thou, the patron and receiver of the oaths of mortals, art executing thy official duty on this occasion. Mercury, go directly for Jupiter Pluvius, inform him by the way, what is passing—but remind him to wring his locks before he comes in. Now, king Louis, what dost thou think of the new exhibition, with which thy

Franks are to entertain us to-day?

Saint Louis.

It is, indeed, so novel, so much above what we are accustomed to behold, when we look down upon that melancholy theatre of human folly, and of self-made misery, that even when I turn my eyes upon it, I scarcely trust my senses.

Jupiter Olympius.

Yet to this must it come, if that lovely edifice, with whose plan the wise among mortals have silently been occupied for ages, was to rest
on

on a durable foundation. I own, mankind will begin to interest me, where I see the majority in one speck of earth conduct themselves like rational beings. Should they go on thus, they will at length bring me to grow fond of them.

Jupiter Pluvius appears.

Not too near, Pluvius.

Pluvius.

What is thy will, mighty Jupiter?

Jupiter Olympius.

Has not Mercury already told thee?

G 3

Pluvius.

Pluvius.

He has: but allow me, in the name of all sublunary nature, to represent that, notwithstanding all my readiness to contribute a share toward embellishing this fourteenth of July, it is a sheer impossibility to comply with thy wishes.

Jupiter Olympius.

An impossibility; how so Pluvius?

Pluvius.

I need not tell thee, that in the administration of the atmosphere, so strict a regularity prevails, both of
recept

receit and expenditure, that, to confine myself to my own department, no drop of rain, more or less, sooner or later, can fall on this or that spot of ground, without the economy of the whole planet suffering for it perceptibly, by means of a long arranged and prepared mechanism, in which not the least change can be made, without great inconvenience to the human race, and to a countless tribe of animal and vegetable beings. I must to-day, let it rain at Paris, almost without interruption, from morn till night, so that I do not see how the proposed solemnity can be executed, even with decency, much less with convenience and pleasure.

Horkius.

The day cannot now be changed;
therefore, my good Pluvius,—

Pluvius.

I am sorry for it, for I shall
pour so as to astonish you. There
is no help for it.

Horkius.

Every thing is provided for to-
day, and appointed with the whole
nation at a given hour. It must
remain so, should the field of Mars
become a lake. But, after all, does
not

not every thing depend upon thy will, most potent Olympius, wouldst thou but command?

Jupiter Olympius.

What, art thou projecting, Horcius, that to accommodate thy procession, I should issue a command by which millions of creatures would innocently suffer? Thou hast not learnt this, I hope, in the National Assembly.

Horcius.

Pardon me, I wish not to urge thee to injustice; but I cannot imagine what the world at large

G 5

would

would have to suffer, if, at this moment, a fresh north-easter were to spring up, and drive back into the Atlantic the water-bags which Pluvius is so abundantly collecting. At least it could not much signify if his operations were put off for an hour or two.

Pluvius.

I must know best if it signifies.
Not one moment of delay.

Jupiter Olympius.

Thou dost not understand these things, my dear Horkius. If 'tis as he says, I cannot avail thee.

Horkius.

Horkius.

But, my festival! Such a day for such a meeting! A day, whose like the earth never saw since it turns upon an axle. What provokes me most is the wicked joy which those provoking aristocrats will have in laughing at us.

Jupiter Olympius.

Nature cannot attend to those things, my son. She goes her own way.

Pluvius.

Unless, Olympius, thou choose to work a miracle.

G 6

Jupiter

Jupiter Olympius.

A miracle, and in ratification of the oaths of men! Pluvius, let this word never pass thy lips again, or, by the adamantine spindle of the fates, I will seize thee by the shode,* and hang thee with an anvil on each of thy whiskers, for three days and nights, between heaven and earth. For what dost thou take me, that thou thinkst to coax me by such weak speeches? Thou shalt pour, since it is to rain, and not a word more upon the subject. (*Jupiter nips his brows, and Pluvius withdraws.*)

* Shode, *coma*, *chevelure*, head of hair; whence shode-star, a comet. The word occurs in glossaries, and is still in provincial use.

Horcius.

Horkius.

(*Going*) Well then, in spite of this ill-tempered waterer, the solemnization shall go on. All the clouds in the universe, may turn aristocrats, they shall not accomplish a counter-revolution. They may wet us to the skin, but they cannot wash away our joy. We will see who gains most honor by it.

Saint Louis.

I ill know my Franks, or they will get through it creditably.

Jupiter

Jupiter Olympius.

I think it were well worth our while to descend, and from the most transparent of the clouds which Pluvius has collected over Paris, to survey the process. Accompany me, Louis.

Saint Louis.

Gladly.

Jupiter Olympius to Mercury.

Is not that Numa Pompilius? who is issuing from yon laurel-grove?

Mercury.

Mercury.

It is.

Jupiter Olympius.

He is just in time. The good man was ever a friend of celebrations: he shall have the satisfaction of attending such a one as he never saw before in his life. Go, Mercury, and bid him come with us.

END OF ACT THE FIRST.

ACT

Mercury

It is just in time. The good man
was ever a friend of celebrations
he shall have the satisfaction of
attending such a one as he never saw
before in his life. Go, Mercury,
and bid him come with us.

END OF ACT THE FIRST

ACT

ACT

THE SECOND.

*Jupiter Olympius, Mercury, Numa,
Saint Louis, Henry IV. and at the
last, the Shade of Louis XIV.*

*The Scene is in a Cloud, over the Field
of Mars, at Paris.*

Jupiter Olympius.

VENTRE-SAINT-GRIS! Louis,
do I not see yonder the bravest of
Gascons, the first of the Bourbons,
who

who heired thy crown, and the worthiest of thy descendants? Come nearer, Henry. Art thou too desirous to behold a solemnity, so new in France, as the triumph of civic freedom over monarchial and aristocratic despotism?

Henry IV.

Before I became a king, thank heaven, I was for a long time so little more than any other mother's son upon earth, and so persecuted a one, that I preserved a feeling for humanity, and can rejoice to see my good people happy, even at the expence of my house.

Jupiter

Jupiter Olympius.

Had thy successors been thy equals,
 as men, Henry Bourbon, the six-
 teenth Louis would not have lived
 to see this day, which I suspect will
 not be marked with red ink in his
 calendar. Come, and sit by us:
 from this cloud you will see every
 thing conveniently.

Saint Louis.

(*Looking-down*) A magnificent
 theatre, I own, for such an exhibi-
 tion. How my good city of Paris
 is changed since my time!

Mercury.

Mercury.

And what opinion wilt thou form of the modern Parisians, when thou hearest that this vast semicircle of amphitheatrical seats is the voluntary labor of more than a hundred thousand citizens of Paris, of both sexes, who, with an enthusiasm, uncheck'd by the impediment of foul weather, worked for many days from dawn till twilight, when they perceived that twelve thousand hired labourers would be insufficient to accomplish it by the fourteenth of July?

Numa to Saint Louis.

Should this enthusiasm once be the ruling passion of the nation, it becomes

becomes, from that moment, the foremost in the world.

Henry IV.

The enthusiasm which a newly acquired freedom breathes into a long oppressed, but naturally lively and fiery people, operates like the first love. The lover believes himself, in certain moments, more than a man, because his mistress is a divinity; he undertakes the impossible, if the preservation or possession of the beloved person be at stake: but he must indeed be a god, if so high a pitch of tension could become so natural to him as to last long.

Mercury.

Mercury.

What countless throngs pressing
from all sides to the field! What
streams of men!

Numa.

And what drenching showers!

Jupiter Olympius

Indeed, Pluvius keeps his word
beyond my expectation.

Numa.

It is a pity, on so magnificent a
festival. It really deserved a favour-
able weather.

Mercury.

Mercury.

And yet you see those citizen-soldiers, in the midst of the pouring rain, dancing with shout and song, around the altar of liberty.

Saint Louis.

I am glad my Franks have got this opportunity of shewing, that it is not in the power of the elements to damp, much less to quench, a fire like theirs. Did not I foretell it would be so? In what lovely awful order the long train of representatives of the people, and their protectors, accompanied by the whole citizenry

citizenry of this immeasurable metropolis, march along, with their ensigns and banners, laughing at the storm ! What triumph sparkles in their eyes ! The torrents from above, the dissolving ground below, the dripping clothes and pattering umbrellas, the inconveniences of all kinds, the disappointment of so proud a day, the malicious pleasure of the other party, nothing that would have soured the temper of any other nation, can destroy their good-humour, or impair their courage, or even lessen the joy of this illustrious occasion.

Jupiter Olympius.

To speak right down upon the subject, they would ill deserve the
 freedom

freedom, which to-day is intrusted to them for ever, if a deranged hair-dress and a shoe-ful of water could in such a moment make them tetchy. What less can they suffer for so desirable an object? Henry, to make a stolen visit to his charming Gabriella, would have thought nothing of ten times stormier weather in a dark winter's night.

Henry.

Who knows the omnipotence of love better than Jupiter?

Mercury.

Methinks the king is a long time to wait for.

H

Jupiter

Jupiter Olympius.

I cannot much blame him. The pleasure of being huzza'd by a couple of hundred thousand men, the least of whom thinks himself at this moment a little king, may not be so very great in his eyes, as to make him over impatient to come and catch a cold and a toothach.

Saint Louis.

When one recollects, that but two years ago there were dungeons in the Bastille for whoever ventured to dispute the fundamental axiom of the monarchy, that the king is the
only

only source of law, and accountable only to God for the exercise of his power; and that Louis XVI. till the middle of the year 1789, had never heard any other language than this with every Vive-le-roi, that had vibrated in his ear since his accession; had never held any other opinion of his subjects, than that there prevailed among them an unconditional readiness to do every thing for him, and to suffer every thing from him—when one recollects all this, it ought not to appear surprising that he is not hastening with very rapid strides to take an oath to the nation, which a little time ago was nothing, that he acknowledges it as the only

fountain of sovereignty, and himself as the first citizen, bound, like the meanest cottager, to obey the laws of the people's representatives, and to have no will but theirs. Great indeed, is the stride from what he was, and was believed to be, by the whole world, to what he now is. It is a *salto mortale* which a man takes not without being stunned. What I wonder at in him is, that in all the extraordinary occurrences of his time, he has conducted himself with such tolerable decency.

Henry IV.

He is a Bourbon, my dear father, and *bonhommie* has ever been the prevailing feature of the family.

Mercury.

Mercury.

And this *bonhommie*, Henry, with thy comprehensive mind, thy prudence, thy courage, and thy old-fangled honesty, would have made him, in the present crisis, the saver of his people, the soul of every public transaction, the idol of every bosom, and the founder of a new, a lasting, and a happy monarchy. How small were his difficulties compared with thine! How weak in its origin, that cabal of ambitious demagogues, with whom he had to struggle, when compared with the ambitious ligue, over which thy own prudence and steadiness alone enabled thee finally to triumph!

Jupiter Olympius.

Mercury, how thou runnest on.
 Would he have been in Louis's age
 and circumstances, the man he
 became in those of Henry IV?

Henry IV.

I was never a great reasoner,
 but, methinks, every one is all he
 can be in his circumstances. The
 son of a prince is but a man like
 another, and it ought as little to
 be expected from him to become a
 Minos, a Numa, a Cæsar, or a
 Trajan, if it is not given him, as
 to become the best dancer or swim-
 mer

mer of his countrymen. Let us judge mildly. The difficulties which, at last, all at once, burst upon Louis XVI. were for him infinitely greater than mine for me; and he had no D'Aubigné, no Du Plessis Mornay, no Sully, by his side, like me. Had he such friends, who can tell but he might, perhaps, better have known how to use them than I?

Jupiter Olympius.

Thy hand, good Henry. That is a speech which does thy heart honor, even if with thy perhaps thou shouldst not have guessed it. But what means this bustle which, all

at once, has put the field of Mars in motion?

Mercury.

At length the principal figure appears.

Jupiter Olympius.

The poor king! How pale he looks! How little he can accustom himself to this new face of things! In spite of all these thundering Vive-le-rois, which rend the very clouds, he certainly is far from imagining himself among his children, repeatedly as the deputies of the good city of Paris may tell

tell him so. Good-hearted Louis, couldst thou but really imagine this, who would be happier than thou?

Mercury.

But seriously: What can a reasonable being desire more than, among twenty-six millions of men, to be the first, and to receive twenty-five millions of livres, without having any thing else to do for it, than to hear the softest things in the world declaimed to him, and to say 'yes' to every proposal that is made him?

Saint Louis.

I own I should, myself, feel very comfortable with these advantages.

Henry IV.

And what is still worse, it is yet a great question how the kingdom will find itself, now that the royal authority is parcelled out among one thousand two hundred old and new nobles, priests, advocates, physicians, merchants and farmers, who, if I know any thing of mankind, could as soon fill the sieve of the Danaïdes, as restore universal peace and order by decrees, which only
avail

avail, inasmuch as the people choose to let them.

Jupiter Olympius.

Thou hast, I perceive, no great confidence in the constitution, at this moment sworn to, and the consequent order of things, from which the French orators promise the nation so much.

Henry IV.

I am very heartily for a free constitution: and for as much equality among citizens as is compatible with the nature of a large state, and with the final cause of society. I look upon much of what the
 repre-

representatives of the nation have hitherto done, as the basis of a good constitution still to make. But much I think was the hurried result of partial views, much the work of a cabal, which hoped to accomplish its peculiar and secret ends, by prolonging the inefficacy of the laws, by rendering the national assembly contemptible to the people, and by urging to extravagance the mutual hate of parties. I cannot conceive any one to mean sincerely the good of his country, and be so far dazzled as not to perceive that they have gone too far to retain so much.

Jupiter

Jupiter Olympius.

Consider in such a revolution, how much is to be ascribed to the pressure of circumstance, how much to difference of insight and opinion, how very much to the eternal strife of private with public interest. Recollect that the most upright and the wisest are but men. At first they meant to go only as far as necessity required, and were floated further by the unrestrainable waves of event. Without a revolution, the state could not be saved. A revolution was impossible without force. When a state only hangs together by the chains laid upon its subjects,

subjects, it is dissolved of course when these chains are broken. Where a government gets to that pass that it only preserves itself by abuses, and derives all its strength from them, the removal of these abuses must bring on a moment of paralysis: and this moment, according to the nature and situation of the men and the things, may be a pretty long one. But, when a people, so enlightened as the French, of sentiments so noble, capable of such warm emotions, has once gained the great point of being free, depend upon it, it will in proper time, learn to use the forces, it can now wield without impediment, to its own real advantage. Every thing must be learnt,

learnt, even to live. The knowing how to live aright is a difficult art: the knowing how to govern men aright the most difficult of all. I myself, be it spoken between us, learnt most of what I know of it by blundering, and I doubt much if it will be otherwise with the West Franks.

Numa.

A constitution for a people become free, and which, from long civilization, has so departed from the original simplicity of nature, that prejudices lose their operation on its head, and religious sentiments on its heart, is a difficult problem, whose solution

is

is now, for the first time, attempted. The lawgiver wants, in these circumstances, all the advantages which I drew from the rudeness of the Romans, and the honest simplicity of my Sabines. That complete conviction, which his laws ought to superinduce, that each can attain his greatest private interest no otherwise than by means of those sacrifices, which the general interest requires, this conviction must do the whole. But in order to rely upon this, one should not only be certain that it is universal and perfect, but also that the citizens will always be in that situation, in which reason has the ascendancy over all the passions and sensual solicitations: a supposition which,
if

if rashly built upon, might draw after it very false results. It is true, we can listen very pleasurable to an orator, who talks with enthusiasm of the divine beauty of virtue; and the heroic greatness of the man, who thinks no sacrifice too precious for his country, who lives only for others, and is ever ready to die for others: but no rational legislator will build the constitution of his state upon his confidence in the wisdom and virtue of the citizens.

Jupiter Olympius.

How then wouldst thou begin,
 Numa, if thou were to return to
 earth,

earth, and give laws to the West
Franks ?

Numa.

If possible, I should beg leave to decline the office ; but, if that might not be, I should not think myself bound to steal from heaven a prototype of perfect legislation for them, but should think I had done enough, if, like Solon to the Athenians, I had given them the best laws they could as yet bear.

Jupiter Olympius.

Thou wouldst then, it seems, have
taken quite a different course from
the

the philosophers and physiocrates, who are now in possession of legislation in France.

Numa.

I should, at least, have been cautious not to abolish one existing law, till I was certain not to need it a single day longer. I should have been cautious not to free the rudest portion of the people, which has always the most and strongest arms, from old duties, till I had sufficiently ascertained that they would willingly and speedily submit to the new ones I should impose. If I foresaw that my laws were necessarily to displease an important and powerful party, I
should

should have been very cautious not to anger purposely and needlessly, this party; but on the contrary, to gain it over by every imaginable method and endeavour to indemnify it for the sacrifices which the state had exacted. I would not have endeavoured to do all at once, but have let one improvement lead on another; and, whilst I was occupied only with the more pressing, have been content with merely laying the foundation, and smoothing the way for those I abandoned to time and future experience. And, above all, I should have held it an indispensable duty to make no laws under intoxication.

Mercury.

Mercury.

The venerable Numa, with the most innocent countenance imaginable, has been pronouncing, I doubt, a concise satire upon our friends here.

Numa.

A satire! Have I not acknowledged, that I consider the work they have in hand as the most difficult of all those which gods or men can meddle with? Were it not inequitable to expect that a first experiment should be faultless?

Mercury.

Those who in this experiment lose their rank, their wealth, or even their
heads

heads (and of these alas the number is by no means small) are naturally enough inclined to believe, that they pay rather dear for the investigation.

Numa.

Nor are those always the wisest who compose the majority of voices. Can this be considered as a reproach to them? Was there ever a free nation which could boast of this advantage?

Jupiter Olympius.

Not that I know of. Since, therefore, nothing above the moon or below the moon is perfect, let us not expect impossibilities from these
worthy

worthy men, but rejoice with them, that every thing has passed off hitherto so quietly and happily, in spite of the rain and the aristocrates. The constitution is now sworn to; and nothing remains but to hit upon some method of paying off ten thousand millions of livres, fulfilling the other immense engagements which the new legislature has contracted, and raising the income, appropriated by the state to its ordinary and extraordinary expenditure, up to a par with the disbursements, without laying upon the people more burdens than they choose to bear. What dost think, Henry, is not this a problem, which would have cost thy Sully as many sleepless nights as it has to Necker?

Mercury.

Mercury.

I am afraid the poor Franks must look out for some minister who has Midas's talent of turning what he touches into gold—even were it mere paper.

Henry IV.

Without the inexhaustible resources with which nature has endowed the land and its inhabitants, such a gold-maker would avail them little. With these resources, twenty five millions of men will know how to get above the difficulty without an alchemist, particularly as a very productive fountain remains which seems not yet to have been thought of.

Mercury.

Mercury.

Or rather which nobody has chosen to think of as yet, for I believe I guess it.

Henry IV.

The clergy have been turned off their estates and reduced to very narrow pensions. The nobility have not only been compelled to great pecuniary sacrifices, but robbed of the distinctions purchased with the blood of their ancestors. Shall the capitalists, the monied interest alone, be the only peaceful spectators of the distress of their country; they, who during the last fifty years have

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specu-

speculated together, at the public cost, such enormous riches; shall they alone resign nothing to the common weal? So, would what has been taken from the nobility and the priesthood be plunder not sacrifice. So clumsy a violation of the established equality of rights and duties, these legislators can never commit: or if they were capable of it, how should the nation endure it in silence?—Let the rich creditors of the state, after reserving enough to put them on an equal footing with those of their fellow-citizens, who are content with the mere necessities, only give up the half of their remaining claims upon the public, and France is saved; and I shall yet live

to

to see the time, when every boor
can roast himself a fowl for his
sunday-dinner.

Jupiter Olympius.

This time, friend Henry, now that
the boors pay no taxes, is already
come: the question is, how long can
it last? Mercury, what shade is that
which, when the king swore, turned
suddenly aside in anger, and now
stands in the place-Vendome, by
the statue of Louis XIV. stamping
the earth with impotent foot? By
the form and the awful gesticulation
of a tragedy-tyrant, which seems
grown natural to it, it should be
Louis XIV.

Mercury.

So it is.

Jupiter Olympius.

Go, Hermes, and bring him hither.

Saint Louis.

For a king so fond of being compared to the sun, he looks a little gloomy.

Jupiter Olympius.

He left to his successors great examples for emulation and for warning. If they are not the wiser for them, it is, at least, not his fault.

Louis.

Louis XIV.

(To himself as he floats slowly nearer)
 That I should have to survive myself,
 only to behold royal authority,
 which in me attained the zenith of
 lustre, so deeply pressed into the dust.

Jupiter Olympius.

(Smiling) May we ask, proud
 shade, why thou stampedst so angrily
 upon the ground, when thy eyes
 were turned upon the pedestal of
 thy statue.

Louis XIV.

If thou beest he whom thou
 seemest, how canst thou be a tran-

quill spectator of a scene which calls on every king for vengeance? But probably the dæmon of democracy has also seized thee, and Jupiter is got to nod assent to whatever his subjects will.

Jupiter Olympius.

Thou art not in good humour, Louis, else would so polite a man not have left me unanswered.

Louis XIV.

How! Can I be conscious of what I was, and behold the French name, at which I taught the earth to tremble, in one century, so humbled

humbled, and not burn with shame and indignation? What yet remained undone by this once glorious nation, after it had lost all consequence abroad and all authority at home, and, by abolishing the distinction of ranks, had made itself like the Caffers or the Californians,—what yet remained undone to drive it completely back into its original quadrupedal condition, and to prepare its speedy return to the woods, but that the barbarians should lay their tasteless hands upon the masterpieces of the arts, and should dare, by removing the four chained figures at the corners of my pedestal, to mutilate the noblest monument of their victories?

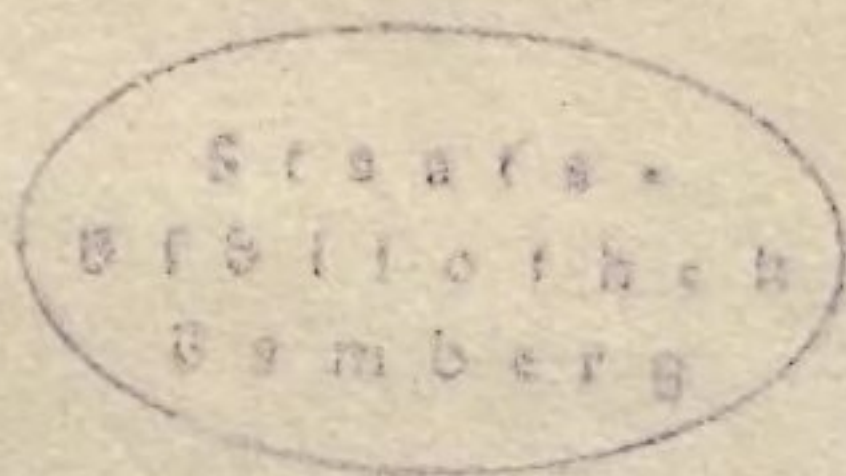
Jupiter

Jupiter Olympius.

Rest satisfied, king Louis, methinks they were very civil to leave thine own standing. As for the crime they have committed in violating the hated images of slavery which lay at thy feet, and which thou viewest as a sign of such evil omen, I will inform thee, by way of consolation, that they are to convert the field of Mars into a circus filled with works of art, which shall rival in magnificence the gifts of the Cæsars to Rome. (*To the others*) Now, my children, it is time we retire: thou, Henry, shalt come with us; thy virtues and thy merits have long earned thee a place in Olympus.

pus. From modern Rome the lover of the fair Gabriella had no apotheosis to expect; but that shall not hinder thee from being my guest, and dwelling among us as among equals. Thou wilt find many, who, like this Sabine, have owed their place amid the gods, not to the capricious judgment of mankind, but to our discernment and their merit. Who deserves to be a god but those who have done most service to mankind? Compose thyself, Louis the great, if thou canst. Ye others, follow me.

THE END.



but from modern Rome the lover
 of the fair Cecilia had no ap-
 pointment to expect; but that shall not
 hinder thee from being my guest,
 and dwelling among us as among
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 but those who have done most service
 to mankind? Compose thyself, I pray
 the gods, if thou canst. Be others
 follow me.

THE END.

ERRORS OF THE PRESS.

PAGE 15, line 2, read Epictetusses

100, 5, choose

168, 6, sacrifices



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AUTHOR OF WERTER'S SORROWS, &c.

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